

KIND

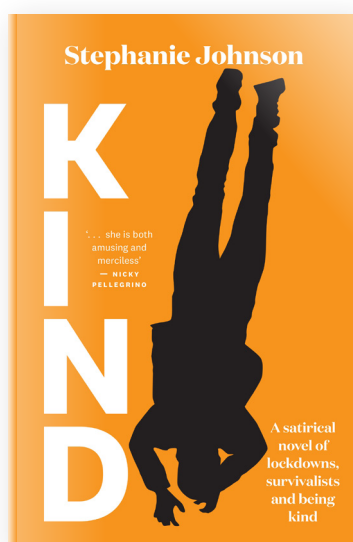
Book club notes

Super yachts and stereotypes, #MeToo blunders and post-apocalyptic bolt holes, locking down and locking up - there's a tonne to discuss with your book club in this funny, fearless and thought provoking novel.

About the author:

Stephanie Johnson is a New Zealand author and the co-founder of the Auckland Writers and Readers Festival. She is the 2023 recipient of the Prime Minister's Award for Literature.

Her writing has been described as 'marked by a dry irony, a sharp-edged humour that focuses unerringly on the frailties and foolishness of her characters . . . There is compassion, thought, and sensitivity in the development of complex situations'



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A note from the author:

I wrote *Kind* as an entertainment, both for myself through those confronting, difficult months of successive lockdowns and also for my future readers to enjoy when 2020 and 2021 are consigned to memory. Two aspects were inspired by news stories, one from the pandemic era and one preceding. The pandemic era story concerned a Labour politician who decided to go for a bike ride during lockdown. In *Kind*, the politician is a National party backbencher and member of the Pandemic Response Committee. The earlier news story is one that dominated media in Australia. A television executive had an affair with her married boss, lost her job and was later found guilty of fraud, rorting the expense account and disobeying a gagging order. Somehow these two disparate stories, and a whole lot of other things besides, became *Kind*.

Book club questions:

1. How does *Kind* explore New Zealand society and preoccupations today? What occurrences in recent times did you notice have become aspects in the novel?
2. The settings of this novel are particularly vivid and range across the country – does this enhance your enjoyment of the novel and is the strong sense of place relevant to immigrants being drawn to New Zealand?
3. Usually if there is a mystery in the novel, it drives the action and keeps the reader guessing throughout – did you anticipate the revelation at the end and did you anticipate there would be one? How innovative is this approach?
4. Would you call this novel satire? Would you call this novel comic?
5. We typically say that New Zealanders have 2 degrees of separation from each other – is that the case in this novel?
6. How relevant is the topic of parenting to the novel?
7. What do you think of the title?
8. Stephanie's novels range from the historical to the contemporary, but are there similar themes and approaches between them?

